

Flag Act FD Part of Oldest Flag Day Parade

by John Dunn

When the Postal People chose Appleton, Wisconsin as the site for the First Day of Issue Ceremony for the Flag Act of 1818 commemorative stamp—there was great significance in that choice.

“Why Appleton?” I turned to Wikipedia and found two connections.

First, like other towns across the USA, Appleton has an annual Flag Day Parade. In fact, it is the oldest, but what sets this parade apart also is that the Grand Marshall for the Flag Day Parade is the flag itself. As you can see in this photo, there are thousands of flags and flag-themed floats in the parade, and still more thousands of free flags are handed out to parade spectators.



This year, the Flag Day Parade is being held on Saturday, June 9—and the First Day of Issue for the stamp will be part of the festivities.

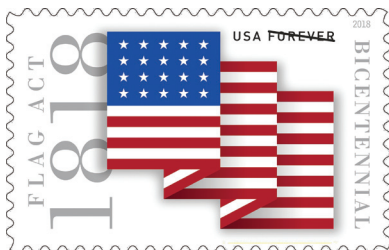
Here's some background from their Flag Day website, <http://applications.appleton.org/parades/flagday%202018/> “Each year the City of Appleton Flag Day Parade’s Grand Marshal is the American Flag. “Old Glory” rides in the Parade’s lead vehicle to kickoff the oldest Flag Day Parade in the nation.

“In 1949 the Appleton Elks Club made the decision to honor the U.S. Flag with a community parade. The Elks, many of whom were WW II veterans, wanted each citizen to be proud to live in the United States of America and to appreciate their freedom. That same year, an Act of Congress signed by President Truman officially recognized June 14th as National Flag Day. The first Flag Day Parade in Appleton was held in 1950.

“Appleton’s parade is recognized as the nation’s oldest Flag Day Parade. It has evolved into a huge event drawing upwards of 60,000 spectators from all over Northeastern Wisconsin....Each year more than 100 units participate.”

Iwo Jima Flag Raiser

Now for the second connection. Also on the Wikipedia page, there, among famous Appleton citizens, is “John Bradley, Iwo Jima Navy flag-raiser.” Bradley, a Navy veteran is seen in the photo at the head of the next column, in front of the famous photo of the flag raising. However, Bradley is not in that photo. Again falling back on Wikipedia, we



learn: “Bradley was one of the members of the combat patrol that climbed,

captured, and helped raise the original U.S. flags on top of Mount Suribachi on the morning of February 23, 1945. Until June 2016, Bradley was incorrectly identified as being one of the six men raising a second, larger flag about 90 minutes later, though he was still on the mountaintop and witnessed—but was not part of—the specific moment of raising the larger flag that was captured in the Pulitzer Prize-winning photo *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima* taken by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal.”

That is the photo that was used for the 1945 Iwo Jima stamp, Scott 929. Instead, in this first, unposed, photo—in what might be called the real flag raising, Bradley is standing just to the right of the flag, behind the sitting soldier, with his hand holding the flag pole.

Completing our coverage, the USPS announcements tell us “With this stamp, the Postal Service marks the 200th anniversary of the Flag Act of 1818, which gave us the basic design of the current American flag: 13 stripes symbolizing the original 13 colonies and one star for each state in the union.

“Prior to the act, the nation’s official flag showed 15 stars and 15 stripes. The expansion of the union to 20 states by 1817 required a rethinking of the flag’s configuration. Rather than increasing the number of stripes every time a new state joined the union, the Flag Act reduced their number to 13, signifying the original 13 colonies, and increased the number of stars to reflect the current number of states in the union. The act specified that a new star would be added on the Fourth of July following the admission of a new state.

“The United States flag has had 50 stars since July 4, 1960, when a new star was added after Hawaii became the 50th state.”

